



Prevent Cavities

Infant and Toddler Tooth Decay or “Early Childhood Caries” (ECC)

Does your child:

- Go to bed with a bottle or sippy cup filled with milk, formula, juice, or a sweetened drink?
- Sleep all night at the breast?
- Drink from a bottle or sippy cup throughout the day?
- Use a pacifier dipped in sugar, honey or sweet item?
- Eat from the same spoon as other people?

If your child does one or more of the above, he/she may develop “early childhood caries” as seen below.



What causes cavities or “early childhood caries”?

- Leaving liquids that contain sugar in baby’s mouth for a long time.
(Even breast milk and formula contain sugar).
- Germs from other people’s mouths.

Baby teeth are important! When baby teeth are decayed, a child may suffer pain, eating and speech problems, and a poor self-image. If baby teeth are lost too early, the permanent teeth come in crowded or out of line.

Start Early to Protect Your Child’s Teeth

1. Put your child to bed without a bottle or sippy cup. Offer a blanket, stuffed animal or toy instead.
(If your baby must have a bottle to sleep, fill it with plain water only. You may need to water down the bottle contents little by little until just water is offered.)
2. Don’t let your baby sleep all night at the breast.
3. Begin teaching your child to drink from a cup around six months of age.
Serve juice from a cup, not a bottle or ‘sippy’ cup.
4. Don’t let others put anything that goes in baby’s mouth in their mouth. (spoon, pacifier, toys or nipple, etc.)
5. Wean your baby from the bottle by one year of age.
6. Avoid pop and other sweet drinks.
7. Don’t let your child drink from a bottle all day long.
(Hold your child while feeding or have him/her sit in a high chair or at the table while eating or drinking.)
8. Clean you child’s teeth and gums with a clean washcloth or a small, soft toothbrush after eating and before bedtime.
9. Take you child to the dentist by one year of age.